

Fairfax Center Phase II Working Group

Meeting Minutes – DRAFT

September 19, 2016

Attendance

Working Group: Jackie Bradley, Vince Picciano, Mark McConn, Jeff Saxe, Robbie Stark, Chris Grisafe

Staff: Ken Sorenson, Fairfax County Department of Planning and Zoning (FCDPZ); Meghan Van Dam, FCDPZ; Marcia Pape, Braddock District office;

Guests: Elizabeth Baker, Walsh Colluci;

Administrative Matters

Vince Picciano, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. The working group approved the July 21, 2016 and August 31, 2016 minutes.

Draft Land Unit Recommendations

Meghan Van Dam, DPZ, gave an overview of the draft land unit recommendation. The first major change is the reorganization of the land units, with the new land units shown on the map handout in blue outline, and the existing land units in black outline. The land units have been redrawn to show new road alignments, and re-alphabetized. A new emphasis on the core area has restructured the alphabetization with a reestablished core area. The land units around the “P” & “Q” area, as shown on the map, have seen the most changes. The Fair Lakes area has seen changes due to rezonings and development over time. Staff has also looked at baseline, immediate, and overlay levels when considering these changes and the intermediate level has rarely been implemented in the Fairfax Center Area. Removing the intermediate level would be consistent with the organization of overall Comprehensive Plan guidance which refers to overlay as Plan options. Staff has also replaced the tables that showed the three development levels for each land unit. Instead, each subunit states what the baseline and overlay levels are at the beginning of each section. Staff has also done a general cleanup of the text to reflect current tax map parcels.

The second major change recognized how development has taken shape and the text has been updated to recognize where development has been approved and constructed. Staff has also removed, in cases of two alternative options and one alternative has been implemented, the second alternative which would no longer be implementable. On specific land unit recommendations that have transportation and public facilities constructed, those recommendations have been removed since the facility has been built. Planned facilities are built into the text now for each subunit.

Jeff Saxe asked about the boundaries of the new Land Unit “E1” in the Fair Lakes area. Staff replied that since it is all under one rezoning it was condensed and mentioned that Fair Lakes is looking at spreading the rezoned density all over new land unit E1 as development opportunities occur.

Elizabeth Baker asked if any development has occurred at the baseline. Meghan replied that not all development has occurred at the overlay and that staff was trying to track Plan history by retaining the baseline levels of development. Jeff Saxe stated that he wasn’t sure if it makes sense to raise

the baseline since there are unknown ramifications. A few properties have developed under the baseline, such as C-8 parcels. Having the baseline of 2 du/ac in an area of high-density, i.e. a shopping center is not representative of what's on the ground. Meghan replied that staff hasn't removed the baseline level since staff needs to preserve the Plan history and establish density ranges. Jeff Saxe cited Fair Lakes as another example since it was zoned R-1. Meghan responded that the text for E1 has not been looked at since staff is working on a parallel process for that area.

The third major change is land use changes, of which 5 submissions have been considered. There are differences between what staff is recommending and what the working group has recommended.

Centerpointe Church Site – Instead of the 1.25 FAR recommendation for the 3.93-acres parcel, staff is recommending up to 190 dwelling units with conditions related to design, pedestrian connections, and frontage improvements to connect into the mall property. Elizabeth Baker had two concerns; first, that the recommendation specifies multifamily. She explained that 190 multifamily units would not be economically feasible, instead a 1.5 FAR would make the project feasible. Jeff Saxe noted that the Fairfax Center Area has worked with FAR rather than with dwelling units. Chris Grisafe recalled the core area having an overall 1.25 FAR for the submittals. Meghan responded that some parcels inside the core have lower intensities and that she thought the overall high-intensity development envisioned for the core area was part of the qualitative aspects that speaks to centralized development. Robbie mentioned that the working group looked at specific numbers for densities and they are not seen in the Plan. Chris Grisafe replied that one cannot distinguish a staff vs. a working group recommendation in the current draft version of the land unit recommendations. Meghan responded that the text that the working group has created and the working group land use recommendations will be presented to the Planning Commission alongside staff recommendations. Jeff Saxe commented that land use recommendations should be consistent throughout with the same designation for density ranges for similar land uses (i.e. FAR vs. du/ac). He also stated that this site would be more appropriate for multifamily rather than townhouses.

Pender Site – Staff is recommending that the baseline and overlay levels stay the same with modifications to the elderly housing option. If staff replans the site in accordance with the maximum 11 du/ac as proposed, the elderly housing could still be developed through the special exception process. Staff is recommending conditions that include cohesive development with integration to the shopping center, year-round, vegetated buffering condition with special attention paid to the electrical substation. Jeff Saxe noted that staff is using an 8-12 du/ac density range for the mixed townhouse and condos, which doesn't specify an exact density.

Merrifield Garden Center Site – Staff is continuing to recommend the original density of 6 du/ac, which differs from the working group's recommendation. Meghan provided a response to the points made by property owner at the last meeting. First, Staff looked at densities along Route 29 comparable for compatibility purposes. Second, staff does not think that stacked townhouses along Legato would create the envisioned transition along Legato Road to the low density area south of Lee Highway. Lastly, the commercial development scenario shown at the last meeting was ambitious, didn't illustrate ROW dedication or the planned interchange, and the likelihood of development in that manner is questionable. Meghan also noted that there wasn't an exhibit for the assisted living showing what the actual scale would be like along Legato Road. Jeff Saxe still

thinks retail is a potential scenario in the commercially zoned portion, and thinks that the site deserves more than 6 du/ac.

Fair Oaks Church Site – Staff is recommending 8 du/ac with conditions about buffering to industrial and public facilities to the site. Staff added this buffering language since residential would be creeping toward public facilities along West OX Road. Additional used include primary access along Post Forest Drive, and continuing a green corridor toward Post Forest Drive. A suggestion was made to better define the green corridor with a more specific definition, location, and linkages. Chris Grisafe added that more explanation can create a foundation for bicycle and footpaths.

NRA Site – Staff is not recommending any site-specific text as the proposal can be done through the Special Exception process, and new areawide guidance would have language for alternative uses.

Vince Picciano reminded the working group that comments on the land use text from working group are due September 26.

Revised Area-wide Guidance

Staff received a few comments from working group and incorporated those into the document, many of which were mostly editorial in nature. Other revisions include: Pg. 42, the areawide guidance for storm water policy added a note that redevelopment also helps environment through implementation of new policies. Additionally, the 1.0 FAR threshold has been removed with the addition of the overlay level development language. Meghan gave an example of areas with large amounts of asphalt, through redevelopment with onsite detention would bring older development in line with modern practices.

Elizabeth Baker asked if development within the core area would provide more than the typical contribution to parks. Jeff Saxe replied that it has been implemented that the developer contributes to private/public parks and sometimes no money is left for the Park Authority if a multifamily development constructs a pool. Elizabeth Baker would like a calculation, Jeff Saxe replied that it has always been negotiated. Jeff Saxe was unclear on a housing issue as it related to proposals that exceed the overlay level. In some instances, an option can be below the overlay level. Meghan responded that both the parks and housing issues for the core area would be able to be clarified in Phase 3 of the study.

Next Meeting

Staff will show difference between working group and staff recommendations within the draft text at the October 13 meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 pm.